DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 449 487 CS 014 256

TITLE	Games and Word Activities.
INSTITUTION	Northwest Regional Educational Lab., Portland, OR.; Bank Street Coll. of Education, New York, NY.; Southern Regional Council, Atlanta, GA.
SPONS AGENCY	Corporation for National Service, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	16p.; Prepared by Linking Education and America Reads through National Service (LEARNS) Partners at the Bank Street College of Education.
AVAILABLE FROM	Northwest Regional Educational Lab., 101 SW Main, Ste. 500, Portland, OR 97204. Tel: 800-361-7890; full text at http://www.nwrel.org/learns/trainingopps/games/games.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Educational Games; Elementary Education; Learning Activities; *Literacy; *Tutoring
IDENTIFIERS	Tutor Role; *Word Games

ABSTRACT

Games and word activities give children another way to integrate their learning and reinforce their literacy skills. They provide different and enjoyable contexts in which children can apply what they are learning. This booklet offers activities which provide a sampling of "fun" ways for tutors to support and supplement their tutees' classroom experiences. The booklet first gives a list of technical terms and then presents step-by-step instructions for playing the following games: Spin and Snake!; Comprehension Game; Concentration; Go Fish!; Word Puzzler; and How to Make a Game Board. (NKA)

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Games and Word Activities

Games and word activities give children another way to integrate their learning and reinforce their literacy skills. They provide different and enjoyable contexts in which children can apply what they are learning. The following activities provide a sampling of fun ways for tutors to support and supplement their tutees' classroom experiences. Some games may be very familiar to you, others brand new. Whatever your experience level, we hope you will incorporate them into sessions on a regular basis.

Prepared by
The LEARNS Partners at
The Bank Street College of Education

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Technical Terms

Blend

Consists of two or more letters that must be combined to arrive at the correct pronunciation. The letters cannot be sounded out separately for proper pronunciation.

two-letter initial consonant blends

s- blends
sc, sk, sm, sn, sp, st, and sw

-r blends
br, cr, dr, fr, gr, pr, and tr

-l blends
bl, cl, fl, gl, pl, and sl

t-blends
tw

three-letter initial consonant blends
scr, spr, str, thr, and spl

Digraph

Combination of two letters that create one sound when pronounced.

Initial consonant digraphs
sh, ch, th, wh, and ph

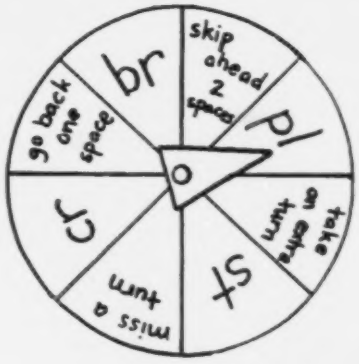
[1]*Note primary resources for gams and activities compilation and excellent sources for more information and ideas: The Bank Street College of Education website: www.bnkst.edu (click on America Reads) Bear, D., Invernizzi, M., Templeton, S. & Johnston, F. (1996). Words their way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary and Spelling Instruction. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall inc. Heilman, Arthur W. (1998)

Spin and Snake!

This game provides additional experience with blends and digraphs at the beginning and end of words, short vowel sounds, and initial consonant sounds.

Blends

Decide which blends you want to practice with your child. You may choose to do a few from different blend groups or a few from only one group. Make your selections based on your child's knowledge and needs.



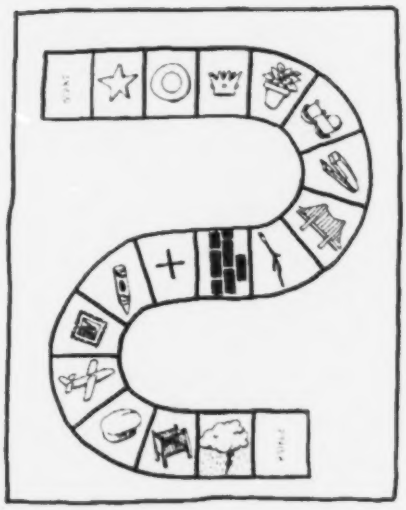
To Make:

Spinner

(See general instructions for how to make a spinner.) Design spinner so that each slice of the wheel has a different blend.

Example:

A spinner may have the following blends printed on it: **br, pl, st, cr.**
Other slices may have game directions such as **miss a turn, go back one space, or skip ahead two spaces.**



Game Board

Your child can have lots of fun helping you make the game board (See general instructions for how to make a game board.) For each space on the board, your child can draw or cut from magazines and paste a picture that begins with one of the blends printed on the spinner.

Example:

A board to match the above four blends **(br, pl, st, cr)** could use the following pictures: broom, bridge, plate, plant, stapler, star, crown, cradle. As your child fills each space with a picture, see that he/she mixes up the order of blends symbolized by the pictures.

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Playing Pieces
Ask your child to find or make small objects to be used as playing pieces. Some possibilities are a thimble, a rock, a miniature car or an action figure, a Lego or some other small block. Pieces may also be borrowed from a store-bought board game.

To Start:

1. Each player selects a playing piece.
2. Determine the order in which players will take their turns by discussing it with each other or rolling a die and going in the order of highest to lowest roller.
3. Begin by placing each person's piece on "start."

To Play:

One player spins the spinner and says aloud the sound made by the blend where the spinner stops. The player then moves his/her playing piece to the next space on the board with a picture of something that begins with that blend.

Example:
If the spinner lands on **cr**, the player would move his playing piece forward to the first space with a **cr** object on it. If he lands on a picture of a crown, he must say the word "crown" aloud. Players take turns until someone reaches the end of the snake path.

Object:

To follow the path of the snake to the end by matching the blends on the spinner with the pictures that represent them on the game board. The first player to reach the end wins!

Comprehension Game

Playing comprehension games with children helps to reinforce the meaning of the story and provides an enjoyable context in which to extend the discussion of the book currently being read.

To Make:

Playing Cards

Come up with a list of questions that will require a child to think back to what he/she has read and express his/her understanding of the material. In addition to asking for factual information, ask your child questions which relate to his/her opinions and feelings about the story. Use your judgment as to the kinds of questions that are right for your child. Using 3 x 5-inch index cards, write a different question on one side of each playing card.

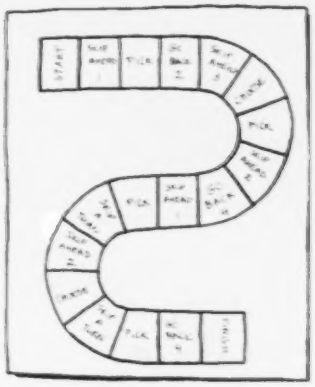
Examples:

- Describe where the story takes place.
- Which character do you wish were part of your family?
- Tell about the most exciting part of the story.
- How could the story end differently?
- Tell something you did not like about the story.
- What did you think about the ending?
- Describe the problem in the story. How was it solved?
- Is the story fiction or non-fiction? How do you know?
- What other books have you read that are like this one?
- Would you like to live where the story takes place? Why or why not?
- What questions do you have about the story?
- What part of the story would you read to a friend?
- What do you think might happen next?
- What kind of stories do you like best? Why?
- Who do you think was the most interesting character in the book? Why?

Spinner

(See general instructions for how to make a spinner.) Design spinner so that each slice of the wheel has a different number. Note: You may choose not to play with spinner by having players roll a die for every turn instead.

Example:
For smaller game boards, a spinner may only have the numbers 1 through 4. When playing with a larger game board that has more playing spaces on it, you might make a spinner that goes up to number 6.



Game Board
(See general instructions for how to make a game board.)
Indicate the "start" space and "finish" space on the game board.
In all other spaces, write instructions for the players to follow.

Examples:
Pick; Choose; Go Back 4; Skip Ahead 2.

Playing Pieces
Ask your child to find or make small objects to be used as playing pieces. Some possibilities are a thimble, a rock, a miniature car or an action figure, a Lego or some other small block. Pieces may also be borrowed from a store-bought game.

To Start:
Shuffle the playing cards and place them in a stack, face down.
Each player selects a playing piece.
Determine the order in which players will take their turns by discussing it with each other or rolling a die and going in the order of highest to lowest roller.
Begin by placing each person's piece on start.

To Play:
After spinning or rolling, a player moves his/her playing piece the number of spaces indicated by the spinner or die.
The player then follows the instructions in the space he/she lands on. When instructed, he/she chooses a playing card from the deck, reads it aloud, and answers or comments accordingly.
Play continues until the first player reaches FINISH.

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Concentration

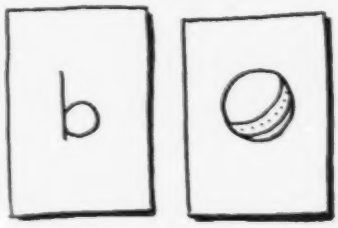
This game provides a fun way to practice the following literacy skills:
- Letter Recognition
- Matching Upper- and Lower-Case Letters
- Word Families and Rhyming
- Initial Consonant Sounds
- Blends, Digraphs, and Short Vowel Sounds

Initial Consonant Sounds

Think about the letter sounds your child needs to work on. If he/she is still unfamiliar with most of the sounds, limit your selection for each game. Perhaps you will choose letter sounds that frequently appear in a book (or books) your child is reading. Maybe there are some letter sounds he/she consistently has more trouble with. As your child gets better at this, you can add more letter sounds to the game.

To Make:

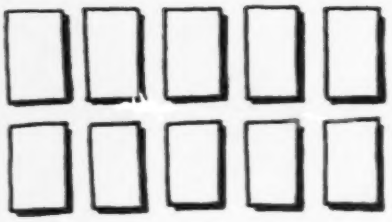
You and a child can have fun making this game together.
Print each letter clearly and boldly on individual 3 x 5-inch index cards.
Have your child cut from magazines or draw his/her own simple pictures of objects that begin with each letter to be studied. Each drawing or cutout goes on an index card.



Example:
If you are working on the sound of the letter b, one card would have the letter b printed on it. The other card may have a picture of **a bed, a ball, or a balloon.**

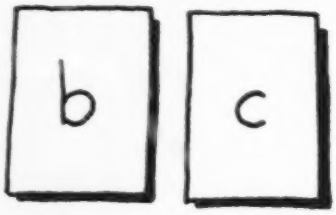
Create as many pairs of these cards as you deem appropriate for your child but give him/her the freedom to decide on the pictures. Just make sure each picture corresponds with a letter card. You may make more than one pair per letter sound. For every picture card, there must be a corresponding letter card so that each card in the deck has a match.

To Start:
Shuffle the cards well and place all of them face down in neat rows.



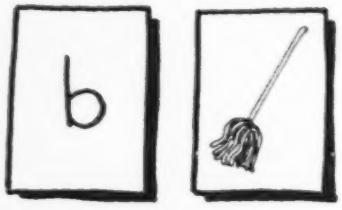
To Play:
Players take turns flipping over two cards at a time.
For each letter card flipped, the player must name the letter and the sound it makes.
For each picture card, the player must say what it is and then say what sound it starts with. If the cards match (and the player recognizes this), the cards are taken by that player. If the two cards turned up do not match, the cards are replaced face down and the next player takes a turn.

Examples:
A "b" and a "c."
A "b" and a picture of a mop.



Play until all the cards are matched.

Object:
For each player to collect as many pairs as possible.



Go Fish!

Here's a game that may be varied to reinforce the following literacy skills:
Letter Recognition
Matching Upper- and Lower-case Letters
Word Families and Rhyming

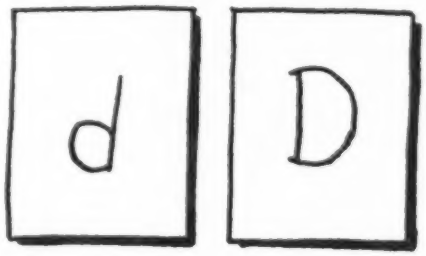
Letter Recognition

Depending on the needs of your child, select the letters you'd like to work on. Do not work on a large portion of the alphabet all at once.

To Make:
Clearly and boldly print each of these letters on separate 3 x 5-inch index cards, making two cards for each letter.

Example:
If you intend to focus on the letters **c, d, f, g, h** and **k,** you will need a total of twelve index cards, two for each letter.

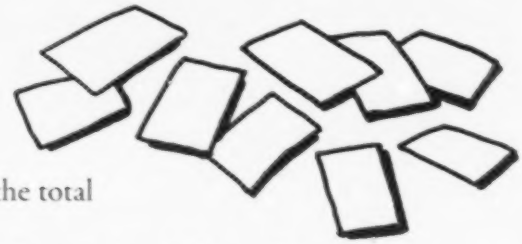
Notes:
It is common for many kids to confuse **b** and **d;** therefore, you might want to separate them into different packs of playing cards.



If your goal is to have the child work on identifying upper-case and lower-case letters, you'll need one letter card in upper-case print and its matching card in lower-case print.

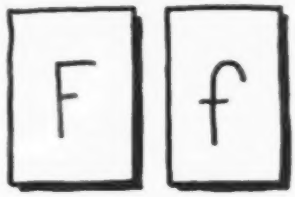
When playing with word families, you may make more than two cards per set. It is up to you to decide how many cards complete a set. Whatever the number, keep it consistent. If there are four

cards with words in the **-at** family (e.g. cat, bat, sat, mat), there should be four cards with words in the **-an** family (e.g. can, fan, man, ran.)



To Start:
Shuffle and deal three to five cards to each player. The number of cards dealt will vary based upon the total number of cards you are using and the total number of people playing.
Place the remainder of the deck face down, spread all around as if the cards are "fish" in a pond.

To Play:
Players look at the cards they've been dealt but do not show their hand to anyone else. One player asks another player for a card to match one that he/she has in his/her hand.



Example:
If a child holds the letters **b, f,** and **h** in her hand, she'll decide on a letter to "fish for" and then ask you (or another player), "Do you have the letter f?" If her opponent has the letter f in his hand, he gives it to her and she may take another turn. If her opponent does not have a match, he says, "Go Fish!" and she must draw from the remaining deck of cards.

Each time a player has a matching pair or complete set (depending on the number of cards you've made per set), he/she must read the letter aloud and place the set face up for all to see. Continue playing until all the cards are used up.

Object:
For each player to collect as many complete sets or to "reel in as many fish" as possible. If you are playing "to win," the winner will be the first person to get rid of all of his/her cards.

Word Puzzles

The following activity gives children some additional practice with word families and provides another way for them to hear and see all the parts of a word.

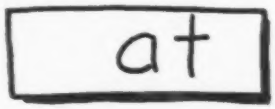
Word Families

Select the word family (or families) with which your child needs more experience.

To Make:
Cut index cards, oak tag, or plain paper into small pieces.
Cut some 3 x 1 -inch pieces and several more into 1 x 1 -inch pieces.

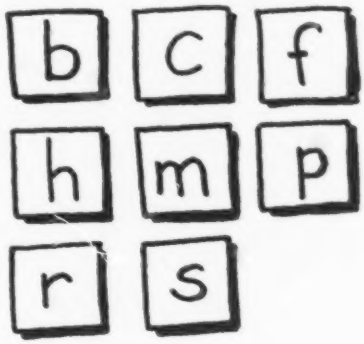
On each 3 x 1 -inch card, clearly print the ending of your chosen word family.

Example:
If working with the **-at** family, print **at** on the card.



Using a different colored pen or marker on the individual 1 x 1 -inch cards, print different letters that match with **-at** to make a word in that family.

Example:
For work with the **-at** family, each 1 x 1 -inch card may have one of the following letters: **b, c, f, h, m, p, r, s.**



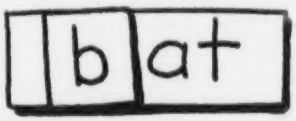
Use your judgment as to how many initial consonant sounds to provide at once.

How It Works:
Spread the individual cards face up in front of you and the child.

Place the word ending, e.g. **at,** directly in front of the child and ask him/her what those letters sound like together. Depending on the child, you may choose to begin by reading it aloud for him/her and then asking him/her to repeat it: "This says **at,** Can you say **at?**"

Every time you read aloud, point to the letters of the word and move your finger from left to right as you sound out each part. Do the same when the child reads and encourage the child to use his/her own finger.

Now refer to the individual letters in front of you and say something like, "I bet we can make other words that sound like (or rhyme with) 'at.' Do you see any letters that can go in front of 'at' to make another word?" Show the child what you mean by choosing one of the initial consonant cards and sliding it in front of the **-at** card. Sound out the newly made word while pointing to each part of the word as you read it.

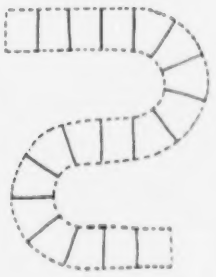


Ask the child if he/she sees a letter that goes in front of **-at** to make a word. Continue making new words with the child and ask him/her to read each one aloud as he/she creates them. Every time a new letter is chosen, remove the last letter used. Then slide the new letter over to the ending card to put them together to sound out the new word.

How to Make a Game Board

Materials Needed:

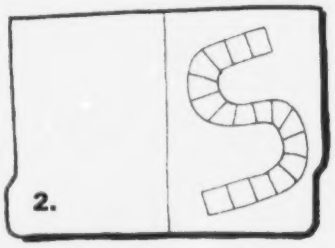
File Folder
Envelope with clip closure (not an adhesive flap)
Magic markers
Copy of snake path from back of this packet (You may choose to design your own shape for the board such as a U-shape, an L, a square, or an oval.)
Scissors
Glue



1.

Putting the Board Together:

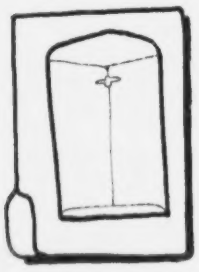
1. Cut out snake path or whatever shape you choose to make for your game board. Do not cut out each individual square of the snake. Keep them all connected so that you end up with one big S.
2. Open file folder.
3. Decide on position of snake path for game board by placing it down on inside of open folder.
4. Glue the back of snake and permanently attach it to file folder.
5. Write or draw on each playing space according to the needs of your game.
6. Have fun decorating game board with your child!



2.

A Place for Game Cards, Playing Pieces, and Spinners

1. Close folder and place it with the back cover facing up.



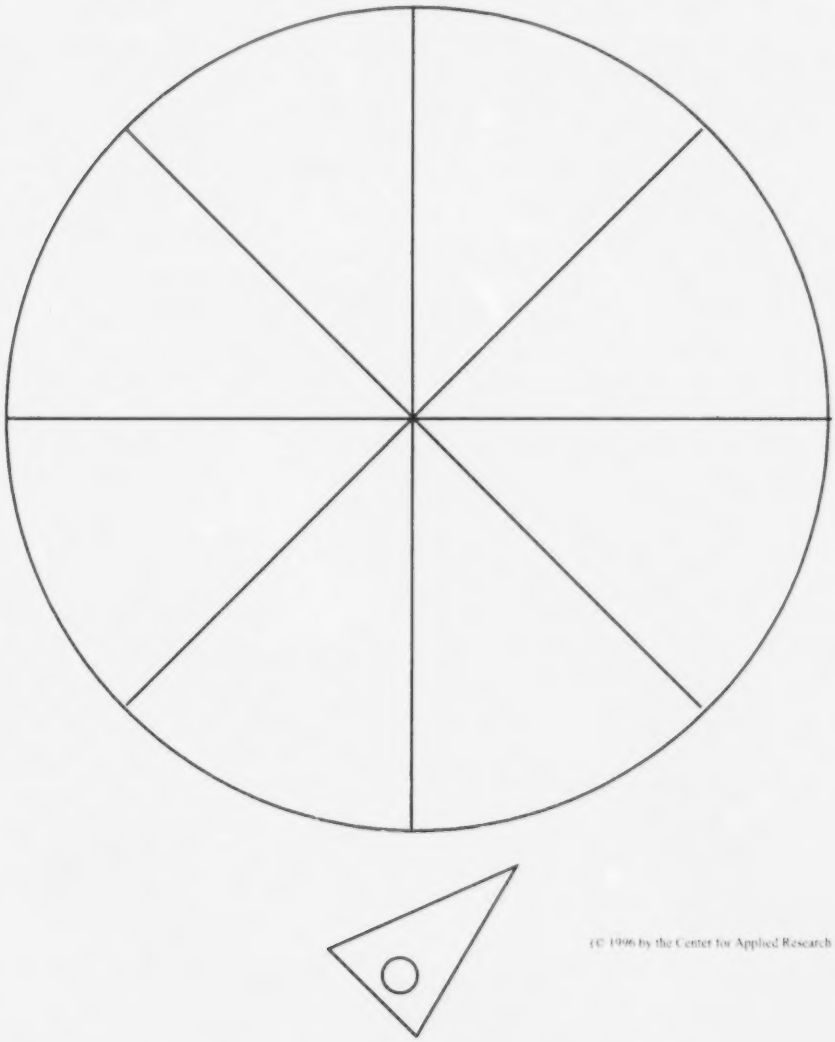
2. Glue envelope to back of folder so that address side is down and flap is facing up.

3. Use envelope to store any small items that go with the game board for the game you have made (e.g. playing cards, a spinner, playing pieces).

This keeps everything you need all together and makes it easy to carry with you!

Generic Spinner

Punch a hole and attach to center of spin dial with paper fastener. Fill in partitions to suit game or other purpose.



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Snake Path